REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 29, 2003.

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 7 and 13 are independent.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki et al. (US 2001/0036068 A1, now issued as U.S. 6,572,236) in view of Zhao et al. (US 6,382,816 B1). The applicants respectfully request reconsideration, for the following reasons.

Applicants first note that, as acknowledged in the Office Action, Applicants have claimed priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-024758, filed January 31, 2001. However, Suzuki et al. was filed on April 4, 2001, which is after the priority date claimed by Applicants under 35 U.S.C. §119 (see enclosed copy of the Declaration and Power of Attorney). Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Suzuki et al. is disqualified as prior art against the present application.

Secondly, at the time that the invention of the present application was made, both the present application and Suzuki et al. were subject to an obligation of assignment to International Business Machines Corporation (see enclosed copies of the Notice of Recordations). Thus, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(c), Applicants respectfully submit that Suzuki et al. is disqualified as prior art against the present application.

The present invention, as defined in claim 1, is directed to a liquid crystal display device including a liquid crystal display panel having a backside; a light guide plate including an incident surface and an emitting surface, said light guide plate being provided along said backside of said liquid crystal display panel wherein said emitting surface of said light guide plate faces toward said backside of said liquid crystal display panel; a lamp disposed along said incident surface of said light guide plate; and a lamp reflector having an inner circumference surface defining a space for accommodating said lamp, a light reflection layer formed on said inner circumference surface, and a transparent protective layer formed on said light reflection layer, wherein said transparent protective layer has a thickness less than about 5 micrometers.

The present invention, as defined in claim 7, is directed to a side backlight unit including a light guide plate including an incident surface, an emitting surface adjoining said incident surface, and a back surface adjoining said incident surface and opposing said emitting surface; a lamp disposed along said incident surface of said light guide plate; and a lamp reflector for reflecting light irradiated from said lamp toward said incident surface, wherein said lamp reflector includes: an inner circumference surface defining a space for accommodating said lamp; arm portions each having an arm surface extending from said inner circumference surface, said arm surfaces sandwiching said emitting surface and said back surface of said light guide plate on said incident surface side and defining light transmission regions between said arm surfaces and said emitting surface and said back surface; and a light reflection layer formed on said inner circumference surface, wherein said light transmission regions have thicknesses less than about 5 micrometers.

The present invention, as defined in claim 13, is directed to a lamp reflector for use in a side backlight unit of a liquid crystal display device, said lamp reflector including a reflector body having an inner circumference surface defining an accommodation space for a lamp; a light reflection layer formed on said inner circumference surface; and a transparent protective layer formed on said light reflection layer wherein said transparent protective layer has a thickness less than about 5 micrometers.

As discussed above, Suzuki et al., which is the primary reference cited in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), is disqualified as prior art. The remaining reference, Zhao et al., by itself cannot render obvious the invention of claims 1, 7 and 13. More specifically, Zhao et al. is understood to disclose a reflector lamp with a parabolic shaped housing with an interior surface coated with a layer of silver and a protective silica oxide layer disposed thereon. However, Zhao et al. fails to teach or suggest, among other things, a liquid crystal display having a light guide plate, or a side backlight unit having a light guide plate. Therefore the present invention of claims 1 and 7 would not have been obvious from Zhao et al. With respect to claim 13 of the present application, Zhao et al. fails to teach or suggest a lamp reflector having, among other things, an inner circumference surface defining an

accommodation space for a lamp, and thus, the present invention of claim 13 would not have been obvious from Zhao et al.

Thus Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 7 and 13 are patentable over the prior art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

The applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached by telephone at (845) 894-6919. All correspondence should continue to be directed to the below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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